

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 4-8, 11-14, 21-23, and 25-31 remain in this application. Claims 1-3, 9, 10, 15-20 and 24 have been previously canceled. Claims 4-8, 11-14 and 26-31 are allowed. Claims 21 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Barthel et al. 5,269,124 in view of Knurr et al. 5,022,219. Claims 23 and 25 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 21 and 22 in view of the amendments made herein to independent claim 21. It will be noted in this respect that claim 21 calls for a "hydraulic tension mechanism operably coupled with the rolls without springs." Furthermore, claim 21 now calls for valving that is operable to trap pressurized hydraulic fluid within the cylinders and for "a compressible gas accumulator connected in flow communication with the hydraulic cylinder to provide a cushioning effect", in lieu of springs that are provided in the prior art.

The tension mechanism of the present invention does not rely upon springs to provide a cushioning action. Instead, the cushioning effect is provided by a compressible gas accumulator operably coupled with the hydraulic cylinder. This type of a spring-free tension mechanism is simply not shown or suggested by the art of record. For example, Barthel et al. 5,269,124 discloses the conventional arrangement of tension springs 16, 20 connected with the movable rolls. Similarly, the movable rolls in Knurr et al. 5,022,219 are yieldably biased toward one another by a tension spring 134. The amount of tension can be adjusted by extending or retracting the hydraulic cylinder 136 that is connected in line with the tension spring 134. Even if ~~the condition of~~ Barthel et al. were modified according to the teachings of Knurr et al. as suggested by the examiner, the resulting hypothetical construction would still use a tension spring as part of the tensioning mechanism, unlike the invention of claim 21.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 21, as now amended, does not set forth subject matter that would have been obvious over the prior art. Indeed, the subject matter of amended claim 1 is clearly patentable.

Appl. No. 10/716,834  
Amdt. dated June 8, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of June 1, 2005

Dependent claims 22, 23 and 25 depend from allowable claim 21, directly and indirectly and set forth further details of the invention not shown or suggested by the art of record. Therefore, these dependent claims are also in full condition for allowance. Claim 22 has been amended slightly to clarify that the second hydraulic cylinder is coupled to the second pair of rolls without the use of springs. In addition, claim 25 has been amended slightly to correct a minor language error in the preamble of that claim.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims of this application are in full condition for allowance. Forwarding of formal notice of such allowance is respectfully requested. Any additional fee which might be due in connection with this application should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Docket No. 33059)